

## VILLAGERS AND THE EXEMPLARY CENTER IN JAVA\*

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The vocabulary of Javanese kingship is nothing if not grand: the great princes of Central Java enjoy such titles as "Nail of the World" and "Keeper of the World," making it clear that they represent the center about whom the world revolves. This image of the powerful center seems pervasive in Southeast Asia. On it is predicated the concentration of political, religious, and cosmological responsibilities with which many Southeast Asians endow their rulers, and from it follows a coherent view of the relations between the king and court, on the one hand, and inhabitants of the realm and beyond, on the other.

Many scholars have discussed this complex of ideas. Robert von Heine-Geldern's remarks about a "god-king" were among the first to develop this theme, though Lorraine Gesick has recently noted that the king, while a means of access to divinity, was not intrinsically divine. Tambiah has characterized a Southeast Asian kingdom as a "galactic polity," one in which "the concept of territory [is] a variable sphere of influence that diminishes as royal power radiates from a center." Clifford Geertz has described, for the Balinese case, what he calls "the doctrine of the exemplary center," according to which "the court shapes the world around it into at least a rough approximation of its own excellence." For Java, Soemarsaid Moertono and Benedict Anderson each locate this exemplary or paradigmatic function more specifically in the king, linking it to the king's capacity to concentrate within himself a store of spiritual power. Such power assures at the same time the king's self-control and his control over the kingdom. Or better, it assures a perfect correspondence between the well-being of the king, and the well-being--peace, order, prosperity--of the realm. In the ideal Javanese view, furthermore, the prince has such an attractive power that subjects and foreigners alike submit voluntarily to his suzerainty.<sup>1</sup>

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\* This article is based on two periods of research in Central Java, the first for a total of twenty-nine months in 1971-72 and 1974, the second for twenty-two months in 1978-79. Both of those stays were made possible by Ms. Syamsiah Achmad and Mr. Napitupulu and other members of the Indonesian Institute of Sciences. My research in 1978-79 was funded by a Fulbright-Hays Predoctoral research grant and by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health. The article was completed while I was an NEH Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton. I would like to thank George Bond, Gillian Feeley-Harnik, Clifford Geertz, Susan McKinnon, James Siegel, and Elizabeth Traube for their comments on an earlier draft of the article.

1. R. von Heine Geldern, *Conceptions of State and Kingship in Southeast Asia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Southeast Asia Program, 1956); Lorraine Gesick, "Introduction," in Gesick, ed., *Centers, Symbols, and Hierarchies: Essays on the Classical States of Southeast Asia* (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1983), pp. 3-4; Stanley Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer: A Study of Buddhism and Polity in Thailand Against a Historical Background*

This understanding of power as an attractive rather than a coercive force, based on a concentration of spiritual energy, disvalues another definition of power, one that is more familiar to Westerners: the capacity to exact compliance, if necessary by force of arms. Should a prince's slight gestures and measured tones fail to maintain order, should he therefore need to exert himself obviously, he demonstrates a lack of power.<sup>2</sup> Implicit in the Javanese notion of idealized power, therefore, is the prince's idealized stasis: his power should be evident in the condition of the kingdom, rather than demonstrated in coercive action. Coercion is admissible when dealing with outsiders, but it should be unnecessary within the confines of the prince's own domain. To assure this perfect harmony, the prince's behavior must be, in a word, exemplary, and the kingdom must exemplify his great spiritual power.

Galactic polity, the doctrine of the exemplary center, the Javanese idea of power: these terms all mark critical contributions to our understanding of Southeast Asian societies, particularly of recurrent patterns in cosmological and political thinking. But two questions follow from these general formulations. One is to what extent the idea of the exemplary center actually informs Southeast Asian politics, not as normatively conceived, particularly in the past, but as practiced in the present. The other is to what extent it informs politics at humbler levels of organization than that of the state. Anderson has shown convincingly the relevance of the "Javanese idea of power" to Indonesian national politics in the Sukarno years. I wish to examine its pertinence to relations between villagers and their leaders, taking as an example the ties that bind, or fail to bind, peasants and their village headmen in three Central Javanese villages.

Earlier ethnographic accounts of Javanese village headmen usually show not a serenely potent leader but an official in constant negotiation with his public. Robert Jay and Koentjaraningrat both emphasize that, prior to outward shows of authoritarian control at official meetings, in which a headman appears to make unilateral pronouncements, there is much covert opposition, bargaining, and conflict resolution.<sup>3</sup> Such wrangling hardly seems to accord with images of a powerful center, and the notion of such a center might appear irrelevant to politics at the village level. But rather than make a radical distinction between state and village politics, reserving classical conceptions of power to the former, it is more fruitful to consider how ideology and particular circumstances combine in practice at each level.

A striking fact about the literature on Javanese villages, actually, is that there is not one such literature but two. Clifford Geertz, Hildred Geertz,

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 112; Clifford Geertz, *Negara: The Theatre-State in Nineteenth Century Bali* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), p. 13; Soemarsaid Moertono, *State and Statecraft in Old Java* (Ithaca: Cornell Modern Indonesia Project, 1968); Benedict Anderson, "The Idea of Power in Javanese Culture," in *Culture and Politics in Indonesia*, ed. Claire Holt, et al. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1972), pp. 1-69.

2. Moertono, *State and Statecraft*; Anderson, "Idea of Power."

3. Robert Jay, *Javanese Villagers* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1969), pp. 295-97, 353-69, 401-6; Koentjaraningrat, "Tjelapar. A Village in South Central Java," in *Villages in Indonesia*, ed. Koentjaraningrat (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1967), pp. 244-80.

Robert Jay, Koentjaraningrat, and Ann Ruth Willner, among others, provide us with accounts of Javanese village life varying in emphasis and detail, yet all informed by an interest in the cultural underpinnings of villagers' actions.<sup>4</sup> These older accounts have been overshadowed, but not really displaced, in more recent years by anthropologists, rural sociologists, demographers, and others, whose attention has focused on the distribution of land, wealth, and control over labor and resources.<sup>5</sup> Clifford Geertz has recently decried these researchers' failure to integrate analysis of rural political and economic relations into a broader cultural understanding of Java, one that would take "socially constructed meanings" as seriously as statistics about the size of landholdings and disparities in wealth.<sup>6</sup> The problem, to put it baldly, is how to integrate into a single account both who owns what and who thinks what.

Without claiming that I can bridge this gap between schools in Javanese studies, I wish to examine the relations between a general ideology of power, shared in its essentials in many Southeast Asian societies, and the particular circumstances of Javanese village politics. I should state here that my interest focuses on how understandings of power inform conceptions of the prerogatives and responsibilities of headmen, and the obligations and entitlements of villagers. My data consist of the public acts and pronouncements, and the private comments, of headmen and villagers, because these make clear some of the assumptions underlying people's actions. Only tangentially do I discuss harvest yields, taxes, and village officials' control over labor and material resources, though these of course also matter crucially to the politics of Javanese villages. I will speak broadly of "Javanese villagers," differentiating only at times among villagers of distinct socioeconomic standing.<sup>7</sup> For an analysis of the critical but extremely complex and shifting nature of productive relations in contemporary Java, I must defer to other scholars: my training and my field work both incline me to emphasize who thinks what over who owns what, much though I would like to overcome that distorting dichotomy. But in noting how certain ideas about politics also inform relations within Javanese villages, I hope to make a start, though it is only a start, on connecting distinct strands in our understanding of rural Java.

The ideology of the powerful center seems to color the views of political action held by all Javanese villagers. But it does not do so uniformly. Like any set of assumptions, those about power and its manifestations contain

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4. Clifford Geertz, *The Religion of Java* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960); Hildred Geertz, *The Javanese Family* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961); Jay, *Javanese Villagers*; Koentjaraningrat, "Tjelapar"; Ann Ruth Willner, "The Neotraditional Accommodation to Political Independence: The Case of Indonesia," in *Cases in Comparative Politics: Asia*, ed. Lucian Pye (Boston: Little Brown, 1970), pp. 242-306.

5. See Benjamin White, "Agricultural Involution and Its Critics: Twenty Years After," *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars* 15, 2 (1983): 18-31, for a good overview and bibliography of this work.

6. Clifford Geertz, "Culture and Social Change: The Indonesian Case," *Man* (U.S.) 195 (1984): 511-32.

7. Nor will I distinguish among villagers of distinct regions of Java. My remarks are most relevant to villages in the Principalities.

ambiguities upon which villagers play in pursuit of their own purposes, stressing now one, now another element in the system as suits their needs. This is not, however, to impute to Javanese peasants an opportunism or cynicism absent in their superiors. I am convinced from what I understand about life inside Javanese palaces that people were just as ready to play upon ambiguities in the concept of the exemplary center when standing right next to it as when separated from it by thick walls and an immense vertical drop in status.<sup>8</sup> In either case, the palace or the village office, the apparent coherence of doctrine necessarily yields in practice to the vagaries of actors' diverse constructions of the actual meaning of these ideas, for themselves and for others. This is all the more true when change affects the circumstances in which such construction takes place, as change certainly has affected circumstances in Java over the past fifty years.

Before considering case material, I will outline some of the ramifications of the idea of power in a village. Villagers want very much to see in their headmen powerful leaders. But powerful in this case means first of all spiritually potent, as per Moertono's and Anderson's accounts, and endowed with the qualities--generosity, even-handedness, and a paternalistic regard for people's welfare--that such potency implies. Bureaucratic power as exercised at higher levels of the government, such as in obtaining government funds allocated at meetings at the *kabupatèn* (county) level, and for that matter, personal wealth, also impress villagers. To an extent, these are seen as concomitants of spiritual power. More crucial, however, are other responsibilities a headman should be able and willing to fulfill: to give material aid to people who are holding ritual celebrations or are in distress; to assure harmony among neighbors; and/or to protect villagers from outside influence, whether mundane or mystical. A headman, like any elder, who can cure the sick or stave off spirits' attacks fulfills expectations of his potency especially dramatically and effectively.

What we would call "aggressive leadership" within the village, in contrast, in which a headman makes demands upon people in the name of improvement and progress, is seen as a deflection from the idea of an effective but noncoercive authority. If the headman's power was sufficiently great, there would be no contests of will: people would submit voluntarily to his benevolent guidance. Discord reflects poorly on the headman's potency, proved insufficient to assure harmony. As Willner has written,

the traditional authority figure . . . [is] hopefully perceived by his subjects as benevolently paternal, or is so treated in the expectation that he will so respond to their perceptions of him. . . . Paradoxically, exerting overt force tends to diminish presumptive authority in constituting a tacit admission that it can no longer be taken for granted.<sup>9</sup>

Since tension is bound to occur between villagers and their headmen, while both are aware that coercive action compromises the impression of the headman's

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8. For manipulation of the powerful center at the center, see Merle C. Ricklefs, *Jogjakarta under Sultan Mangkubumi, 1749-1792* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974); and Anthony Day, "Ranggawarsita's Prophecy of Mystery," in *Moral Order and the Question of Change: Essays on Southeast Asian Thought*, ed. David Wyatt and Alexander Woodside (New Haven: Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, 1982), pp. 151-273.

9. Willner, "Neotraditional Accommodation," pp. 271-72.

potency, certain stratagems are therefore adopted--by villagers and headmen alike--to obscure as far as possible the contradiction between idealized image and action. One such device is for a headman to give his subordinates the task of carrying out his wishes, and acting in the rough, intimidating manner that would contravene impressions of the headman's power were he himself to behave in such a way. Schulte Nordholt provides a good example of this in his account of elections in six Central Javanese villages:

[The] candidates themselves take little or no part in the campaign. They leave this to their *jagos* [lit., fighting cocks; here, campaign workers]. The latter can on the one hand make promises and dole out gifts, and on the other hand be *kasar* (rough, crude in behavior and speech) and, if necessary, intimidate people.<sup>10</sup>

A related device, one that I will illustrate below, draws on conventional gender roles. Javanese often contrast men and women in terms of their differing relationships to power and money. Ideally, men concern themselves with spiritual potency and their dignity; women concern themselves with the more obvious and less prestigious matters of money and children. Villagers often represent a headman as powerful and magnanimous when compared with his rapacious wife. In their eagerness to stress this contrast, as well as to blame his henchmen rather than the headman himself for any heavy-handedness, villagers appear inclined to idealize their leaders. They can maintain, or even increase, their own trust in the essential benevolence of a headman, as they excoriate his wife and subordinates.

Yet if villagers do wish to see in their *lurah* (village head) a powerful center, capable of assuring harmony and prosperity in the village, they also find ways to resist his power. By multiplying the numbers of powerful people with whom they enter into relations, villagers are able to reduce their degree of dependence upon any one of them. Just as important as the felt need for a powerful center is a villager's impulse to diminish the power of any single center, thereby protecting himself from inordinate infringements upon his own status and sovereignty.

A fundamental tension, then, colors all political relations in a Javanese village. Villagers draw on the idea that a figure of authority should be an exemplary center, not a coercive agent, in order to try to insulate themselves from direct or material pressures. At times, those in positions of authority also draw on this understanding of power to shield themselves from the demands and conflicts of political action. Yet Javanese villagers also show a real desire to find in their headman a figure of authority upon whom they can depend. It is this effort to rely on a headman's authority in some ways, while resisting it in others, that gives Javanese village politics their particular tone, and in some cases puts just about everybody at cross purposes.

These ambiguities in village political relations are highlighted by the national regime's current efforts to modify village life through agricultural development projects, increased schooling, changes in political procedures, and so on. Headmen are often caught between the bureaucracy's expansive demands and the villagers' wants. In addition, headmen and villagers all develop new expectations and wants, as consumer goods flood the market and definitions of prestige and status shift. This does not mean that conceptions of spiritual

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10. N. G. Schulte Nordholt, "De Positie van de *lurah*," *BKI* 138, 1 (1982): 98-128 [my translation].

power and the powerful center, or centers, evaporate. Rather, they are construed in new ways, as they apply to new contexts. But this is hardly surprising, since at the level of the state, as Southeast Asian historians have begun to show, such reinterpretations have long been common—perhaps constant—and there is no reason to believe that such deep-seated assumptions should suddenly be thrown over now, rather than continue to be reworked, as they have been reworked in the past.<sup>11</sup>

I will illustrate these general points with data from three villages in the region of Klaten, in Central Java. The headman in Karanganom, the first village I will discuss, fulfilled the conventions of an ideally powerful leader least effectively, and was easily the least popular and least respected of the three. (Since I lived in Karanganom for twenty months during my fieldwork in 1978-79 and so have the most complete data for that village, and also because its headman represents something of a new man on the Javanese political scene, I will devote greatest attention to Karanganom.) The second headman was greatly admired as a powerful elder. The third had found an effective and original mediation between the "traditional" and "modern" versions of leadership.

#### *Pak Lurah Karanganom*

A *kalurahan* is an administrative unit, usually translated "village," made up of several hamlets. At the time of my stay there, Karanganom had a total population of close to three thousand people, distributed over seventeen hamlets. It was an unusually large *kalurahan*, having been forged out of two smaller ones in the 1920s. As a result, the agricultural lands held by the village government to defray its expenses were also unusually large. In addition to these lands, called the *kas desa*, there were also *lungguh*, lands whose use was given over to the six village officials in lieu of a salary for as long as they remained in office. While much of the *kalurahan* was dry *tegal* (fields without irrigation), the community lands and the officials' lands were all *sawah* (irrigated fields suitable for rice growing) of good quality, making the *kalurahan* famous for its wealth. (Karanganom's location near the main Yogyakarta-Solo highway also contributed to the prosperity of those of its inhabitants who were able to take advantage of good access to markets and jobs in town.) The size of the *kalurahan*'s holdings, and therefore the size of its budget, gave village officials unusually large resources to use for development. This fact, as well as the relative youth and "modernity" of its *lurah*, made Karanganom appear a model example of the contemporary Javanese village. Yet the *lurah* himself came in for much derogatory comment, due to disparities between his conception of his role and popular estimations of what it should be. A young man, conversant with the national regime's priorities and rhetoric, and discerning of opportunities to benefit by them personally, the *lurah* had taken up the cause of village modernization enthusiastically. But he had neglected the areas of patronage, personal munificence, and spiritual authority which figured more importantly in villagers' evaluation of their *lurah*.

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11. For redefinitions or conflicting definitions of the center, in Java and elsewhere, see David Wyatt, "The 'Subtle Revolution' of King Rama I of Siam," and Alexander Woodside, "Conceptions of Change and Human Responsibility for Change in Late Traditional Vietnam," in *Moral Order and the Question of Change*, pp. 9-52 and 104-50; Day, "Ranggawarsita's Prophecy," in *ibid.*; and Anthony Day, "The Drama of Bangun Tapa's Exile in Ambon, the Poetry of Kingship in Surakarta, 1830-1858," in *Centers, Symbols, and Hierarchies*, pp. 125-93.

From the 1940s until 1965, the lurah of Karanganom had been Pak Sonto, the son of an official in the Dutch colonial administration. As a young man, Pak Sonto had progressed quite far in school, but he had failed his college-level exams. He eventually abandoned his loftier ambitions and settled in as lurah of Karanganom. The position of lurah is normally held for life. During the 1950s, however, another family in the area rose to prominence. There were five sons in that family, and one of them, Pak Karto, followed his father in working for the Dutch tobacco factories, which at that time were an important element in the area's economy. While he received no formal schooling--people often commented that he was illiterate and had for years signed his name with an "X"--Pak Karto was able to attain a position of importance in the construction and supply of the great sheds in which tobacco is dried. Then, in the early 1950s, he was lucky enough to be asked by the committee that had taken charge of the financial affairs of the Mangkunagaran court in Solo to administer their tobacco operations in the area.<sup>12</sup> Pak Karto soon became the richest man in the immediate area, with the most extensive connections to the bureaucratic and commercial spheres beyond the kalurahan itself.

Such links to the larger, and to most peasants intimidating, world of town and city affairs confer considerable prestige on anyone living in a Javanese village. They became particularly important to Pak Karto in light of the political turmoil of the sixties. Pak Sonto had shown some sympathy for Communist-affiliated groups prior to the coup in 1965, and Pak Karto, who had been staunch in his support for the nationalist party (PNI), was able to take advantage of the political purges that followed the coup to have Pak Sonto removed from office. Pak Sonto was in fact lucky to have been neither killed nor imprisoned, as most men in the kalurahan with similar sympathies were. Following Pak Sonto's dismissal, Pak Purwo, the carik (an executive secretary second in command in the kalurahan office) was named "caretaker lurah" until an election could be held. Pak Carik, not incidentally, was Pak Karto's nephew.<sup>13</sup>

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12. Pak Karto told me that, in the years prior to assuming that responsibility, he had already made a name for himself in the tobacco business. Popular recollections of the event were different: suddenly, quite out of the blue, this illiterate and insignificant, not to mention completely common, man (people with aristocratic titles in the area always did mention that Pak Karto's family hadn't a drop of noble blood) was given an important position by a Solonese prince. To receive such unexpected and lucrative good fortune is counted a *wahyu* (a mystical boon) by Javanese, and many people deemed Pak Karto's obtaining the position just that. Nothing about Pak Karto, it seems, promised any such success as he attained. Yet there it was.

13. Another *bayan* (lesser village official--there are four altogether in Karanganom) was named at this time to replace one who had been imprisoned. The new appointee was Mas Darso, another nephew of Pak Karto, just out of his teens and particularly active in rounding up politically compromised residents of the kalurahan. He was married to the daughter of the oldest bayan, Pak Bayan Kromo, who was the only official to maintain his post in the kalurahan office through all the turmoil of the sixties. Pak Bayan Darso and Pak Bayan Kromo both had excellent PNI credentials, and they took it upon themselves to draw up lists of Communist sympathizers in the area to give to the military officials making arrests at the time. It was said that they solicited bribes in order to grant "protection" to the wealthier of their politically vulnerable

About eighteen months after Pak Purwo took over the responsibilities of lurah, elections were held, and Pak Karto's youngest son (and Pak Purwo's cousin), Mas Haryono, was elected to the post.<sup>14</sup> Certainly Mas Haryono's campaign tactics were designed to remind people of his father's political pull. When he made the rounds, visiting households in the kalurahan in the evening one by one to ask for people's support, he was reputedly accompanied by a soldier carrying a machine gun. Only the son of a man with Pak Karto's connections could expect such solicitous behavior from the military. He also enlisted many other villagers to campaign for him, who either accompanied him or made their own evening rounds encouraging people to vote for Mas Haryono. They were willing to do this in part because of expectations of patronage. Anyone who helped Mas Haryono's campaign could assume some return if he was elected. But what might be called negative patronage also induced people to assist him. Many people in the kalurahan had felt some sympathy with the PKI in the early 1960s. When the government turned against them, they felt obliged to curry favor with the most notable PNI sympathizers in the area, among them Pak Karto. This was especially true of former political prisoners. Pak Karto and his son both made it clear to such politically vulnerable people that their rehabilitation depended on their readiness to render services demanded of them. So ex-prisoners were induced to participate in the campaigning, as later, after the election, they were made to perform a variety of menial functions in the village and in the lurah's home.<sup>15</sup>

When Mas Haryono became lurah, he was still a young man, about twenty-two, and a bachelor. He had lived in Karanganyam as a child, then in adolescence had moved to a nearby village. He had graduated from high school and begun university studies at the University of Gajah Mada in Yogyakarta, one of the two most prestigious universities in Indonesia. On flunking his courses at Gajah Mada, he went on to get a degree from an academy in Yogya. When he became lurah, Mas Haryono was known primarily as the son of Pak Karto. Only a few youths in the village knew him personally. When asked how a young man

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neighbors. On receipt of gifts, they would delete such people's names from the lists.

14. Pak Purwo remained carik, but he would actually have preferred to have become permanent lurah. Rumor had it that it was his uncle, Pak Karto, who made sure that Pak Purwo was kept out of the running by having him fail the qualifying exam at the kabupaten office. (People in many kalurahan in Central Java complained of such manipulations of the qualifying exams to eliminate all significant competition in an election.) Rumor also had it that one of Mas Haryono's two older brothers wanted to run for lurah, too, and it took Pak Karto some effort to dissuade him from doing so. Of the two other candidates permitted to campaign, one got a job in the civil service in Jakarta before the election, and the other, a school teacher, removed himself from the lists at the last minute, some say because of intimidation.

15. This was not always accomplished without friction. I was told that on one occasion when the politically compromised were instructed to work on the grounds in front of the kalurahan office, they were served only tea without sugar, instead of the sweet tea and snacks laborers usually receive. Some among them turned the cups over on the ground to signal their outrage. The young bayan, Mas Darso, reportedly urged that they be shot outright, but sugar was eventually provided and the work proceeded.



little known to the population of Karanganom had been elected lurah, most people in the kalurahan said simply that his father "was in charge" (*kuwasa*) in the area at the time.<sup>16</sup>

Pak Lurah presented himself, to any assembly as well as to an outsider, in such a way as to emphasize his interest in modernization. Soon after his election, he supported several irrigation projects in the kalurahan, some small scale (improving water conduits to the fields), one large scale (the construction of a small dam and waterworks connected to it). The latter project was a remarkable achievement, since it required persuading a group of farmers not only to accept but also to pay back a large loan financing the dam. The farmers paid the debt by delivering a portion of their harvests to the kalurahan over two years, and the project constituted a rare exception in the history of stalled or unsuccessful attempts at village improvements in Java. Another project Pak Lurah initiated was widening and improving the dirt road from the highway to the kalurahan office, a distance of about half a mile. This project ran into difficulties, because the farmers whose sawah abutted the road resisted both the confiscation of part of their land and the planting of trees along the road: they felt that the shade would diminish their crop. Some of the newly planted trees were even chopped down during the night. But Pak Lurah's wishes eventually prevailed.

Pak Lurah also supported the diversification of the agricultural economy through model experiments. In the area in front of his home, he had a fish tank built and stocked, a field with various citrus trees laid out, and a pig sty constructed. These projects also aroused some resentment. The owner of the land that was used for the tank and orchard was given in compensation a plot from the village lands (*kas desa*), with the rationale that the fruits of the lurah's projects would go to everyone in the village. However, although Pak Lurah occasionally mentioned that fruit was available to anyone who asked for it, no one felt bold enough to make the request. Instead, they muttered about Pak Lurah's high-handed use of village lands for his own enrichment and pleasure. Raising pigs, of course, offended the stricter Muslims among

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16. A few more words must be said about Pak Karto. From the time of his son's election as lurah, and in the years during which fear of military, religious, and bureaucratic repression was greatest, the power of Pak Karto and his relatives was at its height. Subsequently, however, this power declined, for several reasons. First, the Mangkunagaran, in the course of financial reordering, sold off its tobacco interests. This greatly reduced Pak Karto's working capital and forced him to go in with Chinese traders from Surabaya, who allowed him much less freedom of action. Second, there was a sufficient reduction in the atmosphere of repression for people to feel less beholden to PNI figures. Former political prisoners were still subject to petty extortion and occasional forced labor at the hands of officials. But a man like Pak Karto, with no formal authority, could no longer intimidate people as he had previously. Finally, he had never shown the munificence expected of a man of his wealth—he turned down relatives' requests for loans routinely—and this detracted seriously from his prestige. Whereas Mas Haryono became Pak Lurah because his father was "in charge," by the time of my stay in Karanganom Pak Karto enjoyed his remaining privileges (most importantly, the free use of certain disputed lands in the kalurahan) largely because his son was the lurah.

the population of the kalurahan.<sup>17</sup>

While some people in Karanganom could name worthwhile irrigation projects still needed in the kalurahan, Pak Lurah himself felt that he had fulfilled his responsibilities in that quarter, and he was concerned with projects less pertinent to production, although equally prominent in government directives about village development. The most important public project to which he turned his energies was the kalurahan office. Previously, the lurah's office had been in his house. A new law required that the office be housed separately, however, to avoid the use of public funds for improvements in a private home. As a result, by 1979, for four consecutive years by far the greatest portion of the village budget had gone to building a modern structure on the edge of the kalurahan (catty corner from Pak Lurah's house, opposite the fish pond). The building was already in use, but the second floor (which would house the *ruang grafik*<sup>2</sup>, the room where charts of village statistics are displayed) was barely begun, and on the ground floor the recreation room for village youths had not yet been walled in on one side. The sums of money already expended (over two million rupiahs per year) boggled most villagers' minds, and the fitful progress raised questions about the misappropriation of funds.

Finally, during my stay in Karanganom, Pak Lurah became much interested in the *wajah desa* program (literally, "face of the village"), a campaign to make villages appear neater and more modern. His interest was aroused when he happened to visit another kalurahan in which the program was already well advanced. He was determined to make Karanganom a yet more impressive example, with the aim of winning official recognition in the annual village competitions sponsored by the kabupaten and provincial governments. Starting with the hamlet where he lived and the kalurahan office stood, he wanted people whose houses lay alongside the two main roads through the hamlet to build brick and cement decorative walls in place of the bamboo fences or the hedges which usually define a Javanese houseyard's boundaries. Neither of the roads was paved, but Pak Lurah wished them both to be widened. In many cases this meant that trees had to be felled before the walls could be built. The sticking point was that the whole effort was to be paid for by those persons unlucky enough to live along the two roads, rather than at the expense of the kalurahan as a whole. To this end, Pak Lurah obtained approval of the plan from the members of a voluntary lending association, newly formed and confined to the hamlet, rather than from the whole kalurahan. (The group was easily persuaded, as only one of its most influential members had a house which fronted on a road, and he had already built a wall.) The organization of village youths cooperated with Pak Lurah and a committee of overseers to direct execution of the project, with paid laborers doing the actual construction. Clumps of bamboo, coconut palms, and other valuable fruit trees were all felled to assure a consistent width of road. One durian tree, much lamented, came down even though it was not on the roadway, because its owner saw no way to finance construction of the wall except by selling the wood. Costs ran between two and three thousand rupiahs per meter. Loans were made available to anyone lacking the cash to complete the project within the allotted time, but I was unable to get consistent answers about whether any or most of the affected householders accepted these.

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17. Pak Lurah later authorized donation of a plot of kas desa land on which to build a new mosque, a gesture clearly intended to placate devout Muslims.

Pak Lurah was much gratified by the success of the plan. Nor was he alone in this feeling of pride. While some people were dismayed at the financial losses they incurred, I believe most villagers felt that the hamlet had indeed been improved by the effort. In particular, they applauded the removal of stands of bamboo, viewed as messy because of the problem of falling leaves and frightening because of the deep shadows they cast. People exclaimed approvingly at how bright and clear the hamlet appeared. (They were not impressed by my protests that, minus all those trees, it was now much hotter.) The walls were not intended to be anything but decorative. They were too low to keep anyone or anything in or out. But the impression--to a Westerner almost suburban but to the people of Karanganom *cara kutha* (city-like)--was felt to be highly *modhèren*. It was Pak Lurah's hope that similar projects would be initiated in other hamlets throughout the kalurahan.

Pak Lurah Karanganom's record looks good in comparison with those of other Javanese lurah. True, he had run out of plans for improving production. He had never had any ideas regarding how to encourage the family-planning program in the area. And he had done nothing to keep the various cooperatives, such as the Bimas project and the Koperasi Unit Desa, from running aground. These programs, national in scope, had indeed encountered difficulties everywhere. But Pak Lurah's consistently poor choice of program administrators--"educated" people of high status, with little knowledge of farming and a disdain for public opinion which made it easy for them to bear the shame of embezzlement laid bare--assured administrative corruption and popular disaffection. Nevertheless, he was active and energetic when other lurah in Java are simply passive. In concerning himself with irrigation, building projects, and village appearances, he had truly earned his reputation as a "lurah pembangunan"--a development-minded lurah.

Yet the people of Karanganom were decidedly unhappy with him. It was said that, if a new election were held, Pak Lurah would not be reelected. The question was more than academic, since there was some talk in Jakarta and in the local press of limiting a lurah's elected term to a specific length of time. (Seven or ten years were figures often mentioned.) People in Karanganom thought highly of the idea and assured me that Pak Lurah would be replaced if the reform came through.

In discussing their dissatisfaction with inhabitants of the kalurahan, I became aware of two quite different kinds of complaints: one concerned Pak Lurah's honesty and tact in fulfilling the role of modern lurah; the other, more important, concerned his failure to satisfy more traditional expectations of an important figure. I have alluded to some of the opposition Pak Lurah encountered in promoting his projects. As he himself said, peasants are not likely to put the good of the community ahead of their own financial interests. Each project aroused some degree of resentment among those villagers directly affected. In addition, Pak Lurah tended to run meetings in a high-handed fashion, no matter whether the annual *tilik desa* (*tilik*: to check in on) meeting, open to everyone, or the more frequent Lembaga Sosial Desa meetings. (The Lembaga Sosial Desa, or LSD, is composed of about fifty notables, nominated by the kalurahan officials. They meet every thirty-five days to discuss village projects.) When Pak Lurah had decided on some project, it was hard to stop him. It was also hard to question him, particularly on the subject of kalurahan finances. This, not surprisingly, was the focus of most of the dissatisfaction with Pak Lurah as a modern administrator, and it requires some explanation.

The kas desa lands, as mentioned earlier, constituted the major source of kalurahan income. The land was supposed to be meted out on either a rental (*séwa*) or sharecropping (*garap*) basis. If a plot was rented out, and virtually all the plots were, this was to be by means of a public auction once a year, so that the maximum sum would be obtained and the financial settlement publicly known. Nothing of the kind occurred. The six village officials (the lurah, carik, and four *bayan* [lesser officials]) made private arrangements with individuals in the kalurahan. The figures were never released: the LSD was simply informed of the kalurahan's total income for the year. As a result, no public accounting was possible. Even among the six village officials, I heard suspicions expressed. Pak Bayan Kromo quoted Pak Carik's complaints about Pak Lurah's secret deals. But then Pak Kromo hinted that Pak Carik was perhaps just feigning indignation. After all, it would only be natural for Pak Lurah and Pak Carik, since they were cousins, to be in cahoots. In any case, it was no wonder that people harbored doubts about the integrity of the kalurahan officials.

It was even less surprising in view of two facts: that Pak Lurah had become a contractor and did the contracting for all large building projects in the kalurahan, public and private; and that Pak Lurah was very rich and growing richer by the day. Pak Lurah made no attempt to conceal his wealth or his awareness of public gossip about it. At one meeting of the LSD he even went so far as to quote a conversation with his wife (Bu Lurah) where she urged him to buy another minibus, while he supposedly responded that it might give rise to "popular misunderstanding." In his retelling, his wife went down the list of ways they could get the money together--the profit from the approaching tobacco harvest, the sale of some rice, a loan from her father--and he finally acceded. At the time, Pak and Bu Lurah owned two trucks, one minibus, one pick-up truck, one Vespa--and had the use of his father-in-law's Mercedes Benz. They also owned a rice-hulling machine, and a small brick-making works. They bought about half a hectare of irrigated rice-land from a local family that moved to Sumatra during my stay. Pak Lurah and his wife may well have had other assets outside the kalurahan of which I was unaware. It was difficult, actually, to determine whether such assets were truly beyond their means, since their four hectares of *lungguh*, his father's wealth, and her father's still greater wealth all put great resources at their disposal.

While it was easy to see why people would grumble about probable corruption at the kalurahan office, public sentiment on the subject fell very far short of outrage. When Pak Carik, who was far less comfortably established than his cousin, bought himself a flashy new minibus and I expressed surprise that he could afford it, a friend said nonchalantly, "People who are *pinter* [clever, shrewd, educated, or of high rank] are rarely honest." It seemed to scandalize people less that Pak Lurah should be growing so rich in questionable ways than that he failed to use that wealth in ways they thought appropriate. Munificence is considered an essential trait in any person of authority or wealth in Java. People are quite willing to disregard the circumstances in which wealth is accumulated, provided that it then continues to circulate. Much of the disaffection with Pak Lurah Karanganom stemmed from his refusal to redistribute his wealth.

Whenever people compared Pak Lurah with Pak Carik, they spoke fondly of the time when Pak Carik was the caretaker lurah. This nostalgia stemmed from Pak Carik's generosity. For Independence Day celebrations, for example, he had put out Rp. 10,000 for firecrackers. And Pak Carik's home was always open in the evenings, so that men, especially the village's bachelors, could get

together there and enjoy themselves gambling, talking, and snoozing. If they stayed late, Pak Carik would invariably send someone out to buy Chinese noodles for everybody. This hospitality was the really distinguishing mark of his administration. Pak Carik's house was still something of a meeting place during my stay in Karanganom, because he owned a television set which everyone was welcome to watch in the evening. Pak Lurah, in contrast, cut corners. Of course he owned a television set. But rather than open his doors to the masses every evening, he had loaned it to neighbors (who were also responsible for having the battery recharged once a week). Many, probably most, evenings, Pak Lurah was not at home anyway. As a local notable, he attended an enormous number of ritual celebrations throughout the area. He was also very fond of going to the movies. As a result, he failed to attend some of the smaller ritual gatherings in the village, and in general, he was felt to be too distant from the village's social life. Furthermore, when there were kalurahan meetings, it was by no means certain that the refreshments would consist of anything more than tea and a few snacks. This may seem an unimportant point. But to many in Karanganom, the only real pleasure in a long meeting, at which a very few people would do a great deal of talking, lay in the food. The nature of that food was a critical indicator of Pak Lurah's sense of responsibility to his constituents. Pak Lurah, incidentally, put out only very small sums for firecrackers on Independence Day.

Pak Lurah's great wealth also caused villagers to wax highly indignant at his, and especially his wife's, refusal to lend them money when they needed it. Bu Lurah invariably claimed that she "didn't have any at all, truly hadn't a rupiah," because the harvest was bad, or she had to make contributions at so many ritual celebrations that month, or whatever. Nobody wasted any time believing her and her tight-fistedness was greatly resented. The fact that extremely few loans are ever repaid in Java excused her not in the least. If anyone has lowered him or herself so far as to ask for a loan, then it is morally binding upon the person to whom the request is submitted to grant at least a small sum. Or if not morally binding, it is socially so, because the moment of refusal itself is found so awkward and disturbing. That Bu Lurah refused people easily reflected very ill on her good breeding. In contrast, Bu Cerma, in whose household I lived, even lent money to neighbors who had "forgotten" about previous debts because she "didn't have the nerve" to turn them down. And when her daughter-in-law, a widow with three young children to support, tried to make some cash by peddling foodstuffs in the village, she was bankrupted by neighbors and relatives who bought the vegetables and snacks on credit and failed to pay up. She said she simply couldn't refuse to extend them credit: she would be much despised if she did.

The issue of the lurah's munificence extends beyond refreshments and occasional loans. A lurah has at his disposal a system of patronage. He can manipulate it to maximize the number and kind of obligations people owe to him. Or he can use it in more strictly financial dealings. For example, in renting out the kas desa lands each year, since the land rent was to be paid in advance, Pak Lurah guaranteed that a certain sum of money entered the kalurahan coffers. He also guaranteed that only the richest people in the kalurahan were able to benefit from the use of those lands, because only the very wealthiest residents had the capital to pay such an advance sum. Had Pak Lurah been willing to sharecrop the land, as he had promised during his campaign but later found too difficult to monitor and too disruptive to budgetary planning, he would have been able to bestow the favor of land use on whomever he pleased. Since

there were, as everywhere in Java, many landless families in Karanganom, by distributing and manipulating land-use rights to the kas desa lands Pak Lurah could have put many people in his debt. He would then have been able to draw on their services in a number of ways, following the traditional pattern by which a Javanese official maintained a following. Even if he did not choose to sharecrop the kas desa lands, he could have had his own lungguh sharecropped. For the most part, however, he chose to have his land worked by wage-laborers on a daily basis. This was the most financially advantageous way to have sawah worked, since the cost of labor and capital input fell below the value of the rice a sharecropper would take as his due, at least as long as the harvest was reasonably good. Sharecropping land, that is, could provide a form of relief for poor people in the village. It would at the same time permit particularly exploitative relations between the lurah and the poor. Pak Lurah chose, for the most part, to avoid both possibilities in favor of the greater cash profit he could acquire by using hired daily laborers. But in so doing he frustrated the expectations of many poorer villagers, who had anticipated a greater share in the lurah's considerable means.<sup>18</sup>

The difficulties over patronage that arose between Pak Lurah and the inhabitants of Karanganom reflected in part his impulse to keep his relationships

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18. Only one person in the kalurahan, Mas Sulis, entered into a clearly dependent relationship with Pak Lurah. He was a man only slightly younger than Pak Lurah, married and the father of three children, who had no agricultural land of his own. He lived only twenty or thirty yards from Pak Lurah's home, and he spent every night in Pak Lurah's garage, guarding the vehicles, the house, and the kalurahan office. (Mas Sulis wryly called this duty *KB cara desa* [village-style birth control] but he also seriously considered it a form of ascetic exercise.) During the day, he occasionally did odd jobs about the lurah's house and the kalurahan office. When Pak Lurah suffered the loss of an expensive brooch, Mas Sulis went with him to a number of magic specialists in an effort to regain the jewelry, and he even fasted as an ascetic exercise on Pak Lurah's behalf. In return for all these labors, Mas Sulis was able to sharecrop one plot of kas desa lands. In addition, while he received no set salary for his work, he could from time to time apply to Pak Lurah for money when he needed it. And when Pak Lurah decided to convert a small plot of lungguh land previously used to make bricks back into sawah, Mas Sulis was given the job, an onerous one, of restoring the sawah, in return for two years' full rights to its use and yield.

Very few other people had close relationships with Pak Lurah. One woman, Mbok Slamet, middle-aged, landless, with two illegitimate sons, worked as servant and nursemaid in Pak Lurah's home, but she was suspected of stealing Pak Lurah's diamond brooch and was fired. The incident was especially ugly in that Pak Lurah had her older son jailed in the nearest town for two nights despite a complete lack of evidence in hopes that this would make the woman confess. Public opinion immediately turned decisively in Mbok Slamet's favor. People had thought it quite reasonable to suspect her, but they found it inexcusable to bring shame on her son and the entire kalurahan by having him locked up.

Another employee of Pak Lurah was the son of a man killed in 1966 for Communist sympathies. The son, now a young man, drove Pak Lurah's pickup truck. But the drivers of Pak Lurah's other vehicles were from outside the kalurahan, causing much disappointment among youths in the village who would have liked to have their jobs.

clear-cut and business-like. The villagers, or some of them, would have liked their dealings with him to be more socially embedded. Many minor incidents indicated the tugs and pulls resulting from this difference. For example, Pak Beja, who had at one time tended Pak Lurah's pigs and done other menial tasks but later earned his living with his own ox-cart, spoke one evening in high praise of Pak Lurah. It seems that one day several years earlier Pak Lurah had allowed him to borrow his bicycle--and Pak Beja had been using the bike ever since. "Pak Lurah has never once asked for it back," Pak Beja said approvingly. "And the fact is, it's a really good bike." It is easy to imagine Pak Lurah's view of the matter: that Pak Beja had made off with his bicycle, but that it would be beneath his dignity to ask for its return. In other instances, however, Pak Lurah had asked for borrowed goods back. When Pak Cerma accompanied Mas Haryono on his campaign visits, it was often chilly, and he borrowed one of the candidate's sports coats. Great was Pak Cerma's consternation when, the campaign over and Mas Haryono victorious, he was asked to return it. Yet Pak Lurah was not himself above such presumptuous "borrowing." When the kalurahan was going to be inspected in a village improvement competition, Pak Lurah borrowed three of Pak Cerma's puppets to decorate the meeting hall in his house. The inspection completed, he delayed returning them, suggesting that the puppeteer could easily make some more. Had he simply given Pak Cerma a handsome sum for the puppets, everyone would have been pleased. In that case, in fact, he and Pak Cerma would have followed something like the traditional pattern by which an inferior presented some form of tribute to his lord in the expectation of a royal reward. It was clear, however, that Pak Lurah intended to make no compensation. After several weeks, Pak Cerma's son was sent round to fetch the puppets, armed with the excuse that Pak Cerma needed to use them in a performance that night.

I don't wish to imply that people sought only financial advantages in their dealings with Pak Lurah. Certainly, his extravagant wealth made them covetous. But a lurah's responsibilities as *bapak* (father) of the community go farther. Here again, Pak Lurah was often found wanting. He failed to fulfill the judicious, even-handed, and paternalistic role people look for in a lurah.

That his authority could, indeed, exert a powerful influence was brought home to me the morning the terrible news came that Pak Cerma's oldest son had just been killed in a motorcycle accident. In the anguish and weeping that filled the house, neighbors kept assuring the family that Pak Lurah was on his way, and his arrival with his wife a few minutes later had a noticeably calming effect. Pak Lurah could "take responsibility." This meant, of course, that he would take care of arrangements with the morgue, the police, etc. But aside from such practical concerns, his presence as an important person, an authority, and albeit young, a paternal figure, was reassuring. Even his much-resented wife appeared to bring some comfort to the grieving women by her mere presence.

The capacity and willingness to take responsibility is thought a distinguishing characteristic of the truly powerful. Most Javanese are frequently at pains to disclaim responsibility for anything they do or say. In repeating an opinion they feel to be tendentious or simply outside the purview of their control or experience, people are likely to disassociate themselves from it, saying "That's just what I've heard. I don't know if it's true or not." Appointments can rarely be considered definite; work is never guaranteed. One reason so little authority is ever delegated in a Javanese office is that few subordinates want to assume it. Whenever authorization for something is needed, the better

part of bureaucratic valor is to add documents to the pile awaiting the attention of the office's head--and to tell the suppliant to come again some other time. In contrast, those rare individuals willing to answer for their own words, to recognize their responsibilities to their kin and subordinates, and even to acknowledge their liability for those people's actions, such individuals are clearly in possession of unusual resources, both material and spiritual. Finally, to act coolly and effectively in the face of trauma also shows that a person can take responsibility, as Pak Lurah did at the time of the Cermas' bereavement.

But assumption of responsibility should also imply that a person is ready to use his authority--and resources--for the benefit of the powerless. In this respect, Pak Lurah proved himself lacking. A poor older woman, Mbok Paira, estranged from her relatives and living alone, suffered a snake bite one day while digging for crabs in the sawah. By the time she finally called to the neighbors for help several hours later, her arm had swollen and become stiff. Someone suggested taking her to a doctor, but the old woman demurred (apparently because Bu Lurah had said, "Oh, don't do that, they'll cut her hand off"), so Pak Lurah had her taken to a curer known for his ability to cure snake bites. A week later, news came back to the village that Mbok Paira was weak and that her hand was rotting away. Her relatives, happy to leave her in someone else's care, and somewhat fearful of contravening the curer's instructions, could not be persuaded to do anything for her. Neither could Pak Lurah. The general refusal to get involved was due in part to the fact that whoever fetched Mbok Paira from the curer would have to give the latter some money. When money is at issue in Java, neither blood nor the fluid that fills bureaucrats' veins flows much thicker than water. Pak Lurah justified his inaction on the grounds that it was up to Mbok Paira's relatives to take responsibility for her care. But many felt it was at just such times, when relatives were squabbling among themselves, that his intervention was needed. Pak Lurah's loss of interest in Mbok Paira's condition after the initial crisis was past was seen as a refusal to assume responsibility for the welfare of the poorer members of the community, those, precisely, most in need of a "father."

His failure to follow through rebounded on Pak Lurah in another incident which was a serious blow to his prestige. A few years before my stay in the village, a poor young woman, Yu Paimin, whose parents were dead and whose brother and sister had left the village, became pregnant by a middle-aged man from the adjoining kalurahan, Pak Tomo, who was married and relatively well-off. Although he would normally have been forced to marry a woman he had gotten pregnant (a man can take four wives), Pak Tomo was able, with Pak Lurah's assent, to avoid marriage by promising to give Yu Paimin child support. He gave her one small payment and that was the end of that--until he started coming round to her place again a couple of years later. Yu Paimin felt powerless to refuse him, but she tipped off some youths, the sometimes unlikely upholders of public morality in a Javanese village, and they nabbed him. With the two youths standing guard in front, Pak Tomo was held captive inside Yu Paimin's little one-room house like a crow in a plaited bamboo cage, while Pak Lurah and other officials from both Karanganom and Pak Tomo's kalurahan were assembled in a neighbor's house. Finally, Pak Tomo was summoned. Pak Lurah then delivered a long harangue concerning how Pak Tomo had displayed no respect for Pak Lurah and had failed to honor their agreement, then further sullied the name of the kalurahan by coming around again; how in a word he had stepped on Pak Lurah's name and so forced him to turn Pak Tomo over to higher authorities.



Pak Lurah sought to frighten Pak Tomo by threatening to report the matter to the military police. Pak Tomo had been implicated in some pro-Communist activities in the 1960s and, as Pak Lurah said after Pak Tomo's departure, mention of the military police could only make him quail. A policeman summoned to the meeting took Pak Tomo off to jail in the nearest town.

Imagine, then, Pak Lurah's dismay when Pak Tomo turned up at home again two days later, with no charges against him, no promises to keep toward Yu Paimin, and no evidence even of bodily injury. It didn't take people long to conclude that Pak Tomo had put some of his wealth at the disposal of one or several of the higher authorities to whom he had been referred. Pak Lurah kept a stony silence on the matter, in my presence at least, but his prestige was clearly compromised. People said that he should never have let Pak Tomo off from marrying Yu Paimin in the first place. At the very least, he should have exerted pressure on him to pay her (difficult as that would have been). Having failed to follow through after the original incident, on this second occasion, he had given up all jurisdiction and left Yu Paimin worse off than before.

I believe, however, that Pak Lurah had taken a calculated risk. By linking his position directly to the governmental hierarchy, he had taken a particularly modernist position. A more traditional response would have been to keep the affair as local as possible. But Pak Lurah meant to stress his position as a link in the great chain of the entire bureaucracy, not just as the highest authority in the village. He wished to show that behind his authority stood the authority--quite awesome to many villagers--of the supra-village government. His tactic failed, because the hierarchy failed to exert the authority upon which he had relied to strengthen his own position.

In the villagers' view, however, Pak Lurah had compromised his power in several respects. If he were truly powerful, no one would have dared to come tomcatting in the village in the first place. Once apprehended, Pak Tomo should have felt constrained by Pak Lurah's authority to marry Yu Paimin, or at the very least, to abide by the deal Pak Lurah had made with him. Finally, by sending Pak Tomo out of the village for punishment, Pak Lurah had in effect declared himself unable to impose his authority upon Pak Tomo, and had brought down shame on the village into the bargain.

The incident epitomized contradictions in Pak Lurah's position. He stood caught between a modernist image of a lurah, which he fulfilled with erratic dedication, and more traditional expectations of him. By modernist I mean not only "modernizing," concerned with agricultural and economic innovation and the administration of government programs, but also "rationalizing," relatively detached from the social obligations implicit in his position. In part, his difficulties stemmed from his youth. He simply did not, in his mid-thirties, win the respect that a man twenty or thirty years his senior would have been accorded. If he remains lurah, it is possible he will grow into the role. But his problems also stemmed from his own inconsistencies. Often he wished to disencumber himself of claims on his support and resources, while at other times he tried to take advantage of the prerogatives his title granted him.

It is conceivable that the circumstances through which Pak Lurah first gained his position contributed to his failure to assume the role of patron effectively. Until quite recently, the political atmosphere was such that he had no need of rewarding people for the many services they performed. This became less true in the late 1970s. But Pak Lurah had not adjusted to the change and, as a result, he lost sources of support he might otherwise have

enjoyed. In addition, he evaded the role of patron, for as luxury goods become readily available in Java, cash displaces patronage as the end sought from one's investments. Pak Lurah's prestige, as well as his pleasures, depended on the huge sums of money needed to maintain him and his family in the opulent style of the new consumer society. So he was concerned with obtaining the maximum cash income he could, at the expense of fulfilling traditional images of the patron. By the same token, a subordinate was more likely to opt for opportunities for cash employment, rather than the long-term security of patronage ties. Money, in fact, was the most obvious area, and it was a glaring one, in which the tension was played out between Pak Lurah's rather overbearing control, on the one hand, and, on the other, the generosity traditionally associated with such a concentration of authority.

Finally, Pak Lurah disappointed people because he neither demonstrated the benevolent interest nor provided the dignified guidance expected of him in times of distress. The result was great disaffection and whispered criticism—and high hopes that the post of lurah would indeed be made subject to periodic election.<sup>19</sup>

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19. The tensions in Pak Lurah's regime were dramatized late in my stay when someone in the kalurahan sent a letter of complaint to the provincial government in Semarang, and a representative of the government was dispatched to make inquiries. Some of the charges were rather stale slurs, including one implying that Pak Lurah was soft on Communists. Others were more substantial. There were innuendoes about Pak Lurah's rapidly growing wealth. Most important, the letter complained that Pak Lurah had taken for his own and his father's use the lands which Dutch tobacco firms had held in the past, but which, from the time of the expulsion of the Dutch until 1965, had been used by the farmers whose plots they adjoined. Though the rights to these lands had been granted to those farmers in 1965, before the coup, this was rescinded after the coup, and the lands have been in dispute ever since. There is much popular feeling against the way village officials have helped themselves to the lands, and villagers in Karanganom complained that Pak Karto, who no longer even lived in the kalurahan, managed to arrogate to himself the use of much of them. Pak Lurah's public explanation for the status of these lands, made at a meeting of the LSD, was long-winded and largely unintelligible (not only to me but to other people with whom I later checked). One point he did make was that he didn't know how to persuade his father to give up the plots he controlled, an argument that carried some weight in a society in which filial piety is much stressed. (When I spoke with Pak Karto on the subject, he was much more straightforward. He had been granted use of the lands for growing tobacco. His tobacco business provided work for many people in the kalurahan. Just because the price of tobacco over the past few years had made growing it unprofitable, forcing Pak Karto to put the land into other crops, this did not mean that he might not at any moment put the land back into tobacco. Furthermore, he was important, he had powerful friends, and no lurah was going to tell him what to do.)

Pak Lurah's overall response to the letter was to insist that it merely demonstrated the envy and personal animosity of the writer, feelings which are common but unworthy of attention. Nevertheless, the very fact that such a letter was sent, and that the provincial government acted upon it, could only confirm popular impressions of Pak Lurah's unsteady place at the top of the kalurahan hierarchy.

As a final note, I must mention one side of Pak Lurah's life which, apparently the most compromising, seemed to win him considerable support. I have mentioned that when he was elected lurah, Mas Haryono was still a bachelor. Soon after, however, he made an excellent match with the beautiful and stylish daughter of an extraordinarily wealthy man from another kalurahan a few miles away. Bu Lurah's half-closed eyes, elegant clothes, and make-up, which was heavy but by village standards subtle, set her clearly apart from every other woman in the kalurahan. Her manner was coquettish in the style of city women, and indeed she had attended high school in Yogya. The impression she made on villagers of a spoiled young thing was evident in the many stories they told against her. These stories impugned her virtue in slanderous ways, and emphasized her cheapness. What impressed me in these accounts was that, after picking over the favorite bones and then making wild condemnations of the hated Bu Lurah, people would invariably end up expressing sympathy for her husband's suffering. They would discuss his petty ailments, how pale he looked, and tired, and then mutter something about the troubles which he bore in silence but which inevitably took their toll. And they would praise Pak Lurah for his patience. Patience is a cardinal virtue in Java, valued to a degree quite unusual in the West. It is a trait deemed especially laudable in a man--women are thought less capable and also less needful of having it. In attributing this quality to Pak Lurah, people cast him in a stereotypical role, that of the long-suffering husband whose strength and wisdom just suffice for him to keep on, despite the outrages committed by his wife.

It was in fulfilling this convention that Pak Lurah was perceived to possess those qualities--patience, judiciousness, dignity, and generosity--which people in Karanganom wished of him. Whereas in discharging his official duties Pak Lurah disappointed people by his inconsistent and even suspect behavior, being neither generous with the fruits of office nor fastidious in the avoidance of corruption, he won sympathy and respect for waging the time-honored struggle against feminine baseness and wiles.

#### *Pak Lurah Pasahan*

While villagers in Karanganom found much to criticize in their own lurah, they expressed great respect for the lurah of an adjoining kalurahan, Pasahan. This respect was shared by the people I spoke to who lived in that kalurahan. What distinguished Pak Lurah Pasahan from Pak Lurah Karanganom was his ability to appear possessed of great spiritual power.

Pak Lurah Pasahan was much older than his counterpart in Karanganom. The son of a scribe in the employ of the Dutch, he started working as a low-level civil servant in the area in the 1920s. After spending a few years in a kalurahan office in the hills, far from town, he was named carik in Pasahan in the 1930s. A few years later, he took over when the previous lurah retired under a cloud of corruption charges. In 1979, he had been lurah for thirty-four years.

Pak Lurah could point to almost no development projects he had initiated. True, two new schools had been built in the kalurahan, but one of them was financed with federal funds. It is also true that Pasahan was a much smaller kalurahan than Karanganom, with a very small kas desa. But I believe the real reason for the lack of projects was that Pak Lurah had little interest in such matters. It was Pak Lurah Karanganom's hope that, after the wajah desa improvements had been made on the road which extended without a break from a hamlet in Karanganom into one in Pasahan (that is, without any intervening

fields), Pak Lurah Pasahan would feel shamed into initiating the same project there. Nothing happened. Pak Lurah Pasahan blamed popular apathy as well as the kalurahan's limited funds for the lack of progress. He cited the years it had taken to accomplish even minor improvements on the kalurahan office as evidence that people were unwilling to cooperate on kalurahan projects. When I asked others about the lurah of Pasahan's achievements—even people, such as school teachers, who were most likely to be enthusiastic about government projects—they were quick to excuse his poor record in development, citing the same reasons Pak Lurah himself did.

Pak Lurah Pasahan enjoyed great prestige for reasons quite unrelated to village development projects. He was famous, not for his political administration, but for his ascetic practices and his ability to communicate with spirits. People liked to repeat the phrase, one applied to any renowned ascetic in Java, that "he bathes every Sura," that is, only once a year, in Sura, the first month of the Javanese calendar. This indicates an ascetic's tolerance for great personal discomfort. People also pointed out that Pak Lurah slept extremely little. Either he napped in the evening and then was up for the night, or he stayed awake till two in the morning. And he never slept inside the house. He ate very little and embarked on all manner of fasts. Most of the time he could be found sitting on a wall above a culvert alongside the main road.

I am not sure that Pak Lurah Pasahan really spent so much time sitting on that wall, but it is noteworthy that people often mentioned it when speaking about him. Pasahan straddled the Yogya-Solo highway on an extremely hazardous curve. The angle was just sharp enough that vehicles coming from the west were likely to enter the curve too fast and fail to hug the northern side of the road. Particularly when the road surface was wet or late at night, when drivers had gotten sleepy, terrible accidents occurred. Inhabitants of the area saw in these accidents the work of the *dhanyang*.

*Dhanyang* are territorial spirits of ambiguous status. Pak Lurah Pasahan had a special relationship with the *dhanyang* of Pasahan which enabled him to protect the village's inhabitants from the spirit's desire for human victims. Whenever the *dhanyang* was sighted, in the form of a large snake crossing the road, people understood that a victim would soon be lost to the spirit. But the *dhanyang* always appeared to Pak Lurah and obtained his permission before doing the deed. Pak Lurah acceded to the *dhanyang*'s request, but with the stipulation that it not take any inhabitant of Pasahan but rather someone from some other area. After any fatal accident on the road, the story always spread that Pak Lurah had previously met with the *dhanyang* and reached such an agreement.

In addition to this special power over the *dhanyang*, Pak Lurah Pasahan was credited with the ability to cure illness and, like any respected and powerful older person, to provide mystical support to people. One evening while I was visiting him, two women and the son of one of them came round. The youth had finished high school, except for some exams he still had to pass, and he had been planning to go on to college. But lately he had appeared to sit about blankly, and he hadn't been studying. His mother was concerned that he wouldn't pass his exams. Pak Lurah took a bemused, even slightly belittling attitude toward the whole business. His questions to the mother were wide-ranging, but he was apt to interrupt or disregard her responses. Often he would break off to ask me something, such as what the staple food

was in America. Eventually, he would return to the subject at hand. At one point, he decided the youth was probably daydreaming about owning a motorbike. The boy said no, his mother said no, but Pak Lurah took the opportunity to indulge in what was at the time one of the most popular turns in Javanese conversation, to the effect that sons urge their fathers to buy them a motorbike, the fathers resist but finally give in, sell off sawah, buy their sons motorbikes, and then suffer the loss of both son and motorbike in traffic accidents. Finally, Pak Lurah counselled the youth to keep studying. If he couldn't study at home, he could study in Pak Lurah's *sanggar* (a small structure for praying). In the end, the woman told her son to ask for Pak Lurah's *berkah* (beneficent influence), which he did, and they left.

Pak Lurah's manner in all this may not have greatly reassured the concerned mother, but his offhanded attitude was typical of some ritual specialists I visited. Rather than engaging in the mystification of formulas, incense, and ritual instructions, as some *dhukun* (magic specialists) do, Pak Lurah appeared unassuming and even debunking in his matter-of-factness. Yet because popular belief in his powers was so great, his attitude only confirmed people's faith. This was the modesty of the true ascetic, the disclaimers to power which the powerful always make, knowing as they do that the source of their power lies outside themselves, in God. When I suggested to Pak Lurah that his fame for doing ascetic exercises was great, he responded, "Who, me? What do I do? I just sit about, and eat and sleep. I don't do anything ascetic." I was prepared to believe him and also to attribute his rambling and slightly slurred speech to his admitted fondness for Dutch gin. But friends assured me that these disclaimers were to cover his traces, to dissimulate his own capacity. A man in Karanganom, Pak Jaya, related how his son had hurt his foot while they were firing bricks, and Pak Jaya had gone to Pak Lurah Pasahan to ask for a cure. Pak Lurah protested his ignorance of how to help but finally said, "Well, go put some flowers on Ki Ndliya's grave. Then it ought to get better." Sure enough, it worked. But Pak Jaya assured me it wasn't Ki Ndliya's spirit that cured his son. Pak Lurah just wanted to cover his traces.

Pak Lurah Pasahan did not, as far as I know, exhibit any particular largesse in providing food or entertainments for the people of his *kalurahan*. Sitting on his veranda in the evening, one was unlikely even to be served any tea, a rare deflection from Javanese etiquette—but one which people glossed as an ascetic rigor. It was true that he lived very simply, although some women in Karanganom told me that he was plenty rich because his wife lent out money at usurious rates. Once again, the contrast between the righteous male and his unprincipled wife only strengthened the man's virtuous image.

Pak Lurah's great prestige depended on his ability to foster an impression of spiritual authority. That is, his largesse was perceived to consist in giving not material reward but *berkah*, the protection and security which his spiritual power enabled him to provide. At the same time, his authority did not imply any unwanted intervention in people's daily lives—no village beautification program, no "compulsory contributions" for special projects, in a word, no activism. In this way, Pak Lurah Pasahan fulfilled at least a part of what Javanese hope for in any concentration of power: an ability to maintain order, and to provide a font of beneficent influence, but without making any demands—aside from the demand for respect—in return. His lack of material support was compensated, it seemed, by the value of his spiritual succor.

### *Pak Lurah Kenthungan*

Pak Lurah Pasahan could bank on traditional images of authority because, after thirty-four years in office, he was himself something of a tradition. A young, newly installed lurah such as the lurah of Karanganom did not enjoy that kind of prestige. But another young lurah in the same area, Pak Lurah Kenthungan, had found an interesting device for bridging the gap.

The lurah of Kenthungan and Karanganom were good friends, and their backgrounds similar. A few years older than Pak Lurah Karanganom, Pak Lurah Kenthungan grew up not in Kenthungan, his father's native village, but in a small town nearby. His father was a wealthy, devout Muslim (*santri*) shopkeeper in the town, who had made the pilgrimage to Mecca. Despite his father's orthodox religious views, as a young man Pak Lurah Kenthungan had developed quite a reputation as a rowdy. His father gave him a big old German motorbike in the days when few motorbikes were on the road, and he had proceeded to terrorize the one street in town. He was also said to have been quite a womanizer. And as is imputed to any headstrong Javanese youth, he was said to have studied invulnerability magic assiduously. Such magic, in contrast to the wisdom sought by older Javanese males, is thought dangerous, because it encourages its possessor to engage in many fights. As a phase in a young man's life, however, interest in such magic is considered normal, and even admirable. It was claimed that Pak Lurah had even traveled to Ponorogo, known throughout Java as a center for occult practices, to learn more magic.<sup>20</sup>

The former lurah of Kenthungan was imprisoned in 1965 and was presumed dead. The *santri* father of the present lurah was of course an archenemy of that Communist-sympathizing lurah, and he was easily able to have his son made caretaker lurah, and then elected lurah. His son displayed little interest in the style or practices of Indonesian orthodox Islam, however, even though he had attended a Muslim university in Yogya. Instead, he combined syncretist religious notions with a shrewd business sense. And acting on both, he had come up with an unusual version of the development-minded lurah.

In the 1920s, there was a *jathilan* troupe in Kenthungan. *Jathilan* is an art form in which a group of men dance while carrying horses made out of plaited bamboo. The musical accompaniment consists of only a few instruments, with an insistent drum beat. Eventually, some of the men go into trance, while two clowns, named *Penthul* and *Tembem*, dance among them. The troupe stopped performing some time in the 1930s, and by the early 1970s only two old men who had participated in it were still living. Nevertheless, Pak Lurah conceived the idea of "maintaining" the tradition. He invited two instructors, old men with mystical knowledge, to come from another *kalurahan* and train the new troupe. They did so, but neither became the troupe's leader, as would usually occur. This role was reserved for Pak Lurah himself.

In addition to training the musicians and dancers, the instructors directed Pak Lurah and other members of the troupe in the business of persuading spirits

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20. People believed that Pak Lurah's son's slight mental retardation stemmed from his father's studies of magic. Pak Lurah must have learned a magical formula too shortly before sleeping with his wife, or perhaps recalled such a formula at the moment of ejaculation, and the power of the magic was too much for the fetus. Such are the dangers of pursuing mystical knowledge.

to enter the horses. (It is these spirits who then entered the dancers' bodies and caused trance in performance.) This required fasting and doing vigil in the cemetery of the hamlet where Pak Lurah lived. Eventually, a spirit appeared to each dancer charged with the care of a horse. But all the spirits and, in addition to them, Pangéran Palembang, a powerful old man who was buried in Kenthungan long ago, appeared to Pak Lurah. It was Pangéran Palembang who gave orders to the other spirits. He was, in a sense, Pak Lurah's invisible counterpart.

The troupe's instructors also taught Pak Lurah a series of magical formulas by which to summon and, more importantly, to dispel the spirits at the time of trance. Pak Lurah, however, found these unduly long and complicated and substituted for them a single phrase from the Koran, which he used in all contexts. The theology of the whole performance was, in fact, quite streamlined. God enables people to perform various startling feats in jathilan, I was told, in order to give evidence of the power of faith.

In the old days, the jathilan troupe was hired to perform at ritual celebrations, particularly to precede the wedding party when the bridal couple moved from the home of the bride to that of the groom. (Apparently it was decided beforehand whether the dancers would go into trance or only dance. Trance entailed a higher fee.) Today things are quite different. On one or, in peak season, two mornings a week, a group of German tourists came to the village to see the performance. At the performance I saw, on a small grassy field, eight or nine dancers began moving, quite slowly, to the drumbeat, in roughly identical patterns. After several minutes, they picked up the horses and started dancing with them. The music grew faster and louder, and after about half an hour, some of the men were on the verge of trance. During this opening section Pak Lurah stood inconspicuously on the sidelines, talking with his friend Pak Lurah Karanganom. But as the tension grew, Pak Lurah Kenthungan readied himself for action. He was wearing a light Indian shirt with an embroidered collar and brown slacks. He now took off the slacks, revealing knickers of the same color as the shirt.<sup>21</sup> He took up a whip, cracked it dramatically, and strode in among the dancers. While they danced, he cracked the whip at their heels. Soon four men were in trance, and under Pak Lurah's direction they proceeded to perform a variety of remarkable acts. One ate broken glass, another needles. One man broke open a coconut with his teeth. Pak Lurah leaned a crowbar against one man's neck and had him push against it. Pak Lurah also whipped several of the men. Finally, he summoned two boys, about ten years old, from the sidelines. Muttering the Arabic phrase and putting flower-scented water on their cheeks, he then "sewed" each one's cheeks with a needle and thread. (The boys were not in trance.) The men had to be taken out of trance by the two clowns and Pak Lurah, while the other dancers sang a song, *Ilir-ilir*. In deference to Western practice, as each man came out of trance he took a low bow. The whole performance lasted about an hour and a half.

Pak Lurah Kenthungan's reputation as a "modern" lurah was considerable. But the fact remained that in a small kalurahan with little irrigated rice

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21. This outfit seemed shrewdly chosen. Knickers are what male Javanese dancers wear in dance drama performances. But any resemblance between Pak Lurah's clothes and a traditional performer's costume ended there. The material of the knickers, as well as the cut and embroidery of the Indian shirt, could only appear flashy and novel to the villagers, while to the tourists they must have appeared suitably "ethnic."

land, he had been either unable or uninterested in carrying out many agricultural and other development projects. Instead, he had made a name for himself and the kalurahan by finding a way to tap into the tourist market. He was often invited to attend meetings in Yogya on how to attract more tourists to Central Java and what to do with them once they got there. He had been invited to go to the World's Fair in Osaka and to take along two members of the troupe. (The two he chose were his cousin, not a participant but an administrator of the troupe, and his son, who was too young to be in it. Presumably no one in Osaka knew the difference.) Nothing in Java symbolizes prestige and success more than a trip abroad, and the event was often mentioned in conversations about Pak Lurah. It is true, too, that while Pak Lurah, as leader of the troupe, received a good portion of the fee paid by the tourist agent, he passed on to each of the players at least the equivalent of a day's pay in return for about two hours' labor.

It would be silly to claim that Pak Lurah Kenthungan had found any solution to the real problems presently facing the people in a Javanese village. Tourism does not offer lasting or reliable relief from the underemployment which affects almost all Javanese peasants. But he had lit upon an ingenious way to shore up his authority, integrating roles, as a possessor of magic and as a progressive administrator, which won him respect. In fact, in several ways his identity and behavior represented a shrewd compromise. Raised in a devout, orthodox Islamic family, he had good credentials in the face of rising Islamic activism in Java, but little personal involvement in the tradition. Such an involvement would have antagonized many syncretist villagers. His exploits as a young man impressed people, in retrospect, as the exuberance of an exceptional person, and his reputation for seeking magic supported his stories about meeting up with spirits in the cemetery.

In taking on the role of head of the jathilan troupe, Pak Lurah Kenthungan had secured for himself the ideal position as its director and bursar and as the person responsible for contact with the spirits. That contact enabled him to direct the spirits as they took possession of others. But Pak Lurah never abdicated the dignity and authority of an elder. That he could perform various hair-raising acts upon those men's bodies and finally cast the spirits out implied that his power was exercised over spirits as well as men, that spirits as well as people had to submit to him. So he elicited the particular awe which possession and trance states cannot help but arouse, especially in a society where consciousness and self-control are so much stressed. Yet he maintained his own distance from these unruly phenomena. Furthermore, of course, he caused a novel, even quite extraordinary, effect every time one or two huge white buses drove into the village and disgorged a number of large, strangely clad, German tourists. Pak Lurah's ability to attract these unusual visitors could hardly strike the villagers with less force than his ability to control invisible and mysterious, yet in many ways more familiar, spirits.

#### *The Lurah as Figure of Authority*

Javanese assume that officials are corrupt until it is proved otherwise, and resent any interference in how they themselves choose to run their lives. At the same time, however, they are in no way comfortable with ideas of anarchy. The need for authority, in order to maintain an even and untroubled social environment, is never questioned. Those people who wield some form of power, whether spiritual, bureaucratic, material, or, best of all, all three, are



viewed as mainstays upon whom everyone must depend. The problem lies in how one wishes those superiors to exert their authority, and how one wishes to define one's relation to them.

The range of behavior characteristic of Javanese lurah is certainly not exhausted by the three headmen I have discussed. There exists, in particular, a very different kind of authority figure: the abrupt, energetic, direct, and unrefined one. In the Javanese arts, such figures are sometimes ridiculed, but they are often much loved and admired by the populace. In politics, the popularity of the Indonesian Communist Party in the early 1960s stemmed in part from its leaders' reputation for honesty, frankness, and a willingness to appear openly hostile, qualities that contrast with the discretion and allusiveness of refined behavior. More recently, military figures who have acted in a decisive, and even arrogant, manner have won respect. People seem to feel that anyone who can risk offending so many people and arousing such hostility must be spiritually strong: otherwise, he would fear revenge-takers. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, especially, the militaristic style, intimidating, manipulative, and "disiplin," was evident in soldiers and bureaucrats alike. I have concentrated attention on another conception of power, that exemplified by the respected elder, because, as political repression wanes, people try to normalize their political relations by falling back on safer models. Some young people speak of the need for more innovative leadership. Other people, recalling the excitement and then the terror of the 1960s, want only that things be uneventful and calm (*slamet, tentrem*). Actually, the pressure on lurah to play the part of respected elder may well be greater now, in the aftermath of the 1960s, than it ever was before.

By stressing the aspect of power that is evidenced in the unruffled harmony and prosperity of a village's inhabitants, rather than that demonstrated in the activity and directives of its leaders, villagers try to balance their wants: insulating themselves from political pressure while gaining by the power--mystical and/or material--that political authority implies. That is, they try to make of political authority an exemplary center, rather than a coercive agency.

It is not that villagers want *fainéants* lurah. They want such signs of development as new schools, electricity, and improved irrigation. They do not feel bold about agitating for any particular project, but they hope that their lurah will arrange to have such projects implemented on their behalf. They believe that he has access to channels through which government funds and materiel flow, and they hope that he will be able to direct some of that flow into their kalurahan. It is in such concerns, ones where the scope surpasses the confines of the kalurahan, that a person is most likely to look to the lurah for help. The lurah can intervene on a villager's behalf in dealing with officials from town, or from another kalurahan, or in dealing with any foreign person. In such cases, the lurah's authority is felt to be protective and paternal. As lurah are fond of saying, a lurah is called "Bapak" because he is father to everyone in the village.<sup>22</sup>

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22. That paternalism, of course, has its limits. One lurah told me that, when the killings began in the fall of 1965, many politically compromised men came running to the kalurahan office for shelter. He took them all in--and then turned them over to the military. In his own view, he had discharged his responsibilities fully, granting the men protection from the "wild actions"

The lurah acts as a respected elder once again when he exercises authority over beings who do not stand outside the limits of the kalurahan but rather outside those of the visible world. It is precisely because spirits are at such a remove that the lurah's power over them is highly valued. His authority is then wielded not over an individual, but over some other object and on the individual's behalf. At this point, when, say, Pak Lurah Pasahan made deals with the territorial spirit to spare the village's inhabitants, or when he granted a young man the benefit of his mystical influence, he was assimilated to the category of a respected elder.

A person who contravenes this conception of a figure of authority, on the other hand, is likely to arouse disapproval. Pak Lurah Karanganom did just this with all his projects. I have mentioned that he won respect only insofar as he fulfilled another conventional image, that of the patient husband. But this image is related to that of the respected elder, since the contrast between men's and women's roles also turns on the contrast between a reserved authority, ideally characteristic of men, and a mundane and obvious control—over such things as money and material goods—exercised by women.

In speaking of respected elders, I am translating a term in Javanese, *wong tuwa*, that means old person, parent, superior, or any person in possession of spiritual power. I think this term represents the counterpart, at a lower level of magnitude, to the exemplary center at the top of the Javanese hierarchy. In both cases, that of the prince at the center of the court, and that of an elder in a village, authority should impress itself upon others through the disinterestedness, bearing, and aura of the person in a superior position. These qualities prove that that person possesses a great reserve of spiritual power. And it is through the exercise of the beneficent influence such spiritual power puts at his disposal, rather than in any active intervention in people's lives, that a figure of authority should exert himself. The fact that the elderly Pak Lurah Pasahan held the position of lurah, for example, was taken as evidence of his power. But he did not wield the power that office gave him in ways people did not wish. Rather than an instigator of action or propagator of change, he became, or remained, a conduit of power, which is what both a respected elder and an exemplary center in Java should be.

A village headman is liable to believe that, as a center of power, his authority should be unquestionable and unquestioned, that he should win both the compliance and trusting respect of villagers. They should assume what a child assumes about his father, that what he chooses to do is in the best interests of everyone. But when villagers try to keep their headmen to a particular understanding of the powerful center, one that stresses his spiritual potency but discourages his activity, they construe it in such a way as at once to restrain him and to release themselves from his control.

These generalizations should be qualified according to the social standing of different inhabitants of a village, as Husken's work on the links between kinship ties and control of wealth and power in Javanese villages makes clear.<sup>23</sup>

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taking place in the village, while in no way obstructing the government's pursuit of its own purposes. But when he quoted himself telling the men that they were right to come to him, and that now they must be calm as they submitted to the wisdom and authority of the government, he spoke in tones similar to those of a father speaking (in low Javanese) to his children.

23. See Frans Husken, "Kinship, Economics and Politics in a Central Javanese

It is true that some villagers in Karanganom would have liked to enter into more substantial patron-client relations with their headman. These people were poor and of low status: they were willing to enter into dependent relations in return for material gain. But, as I have mentioned, in Karanganom relations of economic and social dependence, such as sharecropping, proved far less common and less durable, and they fit into a less extensive context of relations, than I had anticipated.<sup>24</sup> Instead, more "business-like" arrangements, such as daily wage-earning agricultural labor, implying fewer commitments on either side, appeared predominant. In large part, this was due to the reluctance of Pak Lurah (and other wealthier villagers) to take on the responsibilities of a patron. Increasingly, however, even poor people in Java seem liable to prefer to keep their relationships short-term, and other less indigent Javanese are still more likely to seek a discreet relationship with authority. They thereby keep a certain distance from the powerful center.

To grant someone respect in interaction and to enjoy the privilege of applying to him for various boons, and yet to remain free of other obligations to him, is to find just such a political, or politic, middle ground. Respect enables a lower status person to interact in the mode of exchange without any necessary material loss. This is not to say that Javanese value goods over status, rather that they consider respect rendered as valuable as goods or services received. That a person of authority and/or wealth should give gifts without stinting seems only proper, considering his abundant resources. His inferiors dispose of the resource of style. The respect they proffer registers and validates high status. Their respectful language and gesture balance a system of exchange and assure that there will build up no completely one-sided relationship of creditors and debtors. High status, therefore, does not necessarily grant control over labor or resources: it does not necessarily enable its bearer to impinge unduly on others' lives beyond the context of encounter. The hierarchy of status relations may be an organization of exchanges

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Village," Paper presented to the Seminar on Cognatic Forms of Social Organization in Southeast Asia (Amsterdam, January 1983).

24. Husken's findings on sharecropping contradict my own. He states that sharecropping has increased in the village where he did research in the Pathi regency (Frans Husken, "Landlords, Sharecroppers and Agricultural Labourers: Changing Labour Relations in Rural Java," *Journal of Contemporary Asia* 9 (1979): 147). He gives three reasons why, for landholders in that area, sharecropping is more advantageous than other arrangements: it costs them less; it minimizes their risks, since if the crop fails they pay out nothing; and it maximizes their political control. He notes that sharecropping arrangements have progressively reduced the sharecroppers' portion of the harvest, to as little as one-ninth or even one-twelfth of the yield. In Karanganom, there is some evidence that sharecroppers now receive a smaller share than they once did, but the least I ever heard of was one-fourth of the yield. Maurer reports findings similar to my own in the area of Bantul, located likewise near Yogyakarta, and suggests that this is a consistent contrast between the North Coast and the Principalities (J.-L. Maurer, Personal Communication, 1983). But it is difficult to explain at this point the great contrasts among tenancy arrangements in different areas of Java. These are, for that matter, only some of the many complicated variations in labor patterns to be found in Java, as White has demonstrated in a recent paper. B. White, "Notes on Processes of Agrarian Differentiation in Post-Colonial Java," Manuscript, 1983 (in possession of the author).

of a sort, but it is hardly an order of command, even if some lurah would like to make it one.

If respect for the powerful center can be taken to imply both claims upon it and a certain release from its control, further distancing takes place when centers multiply. Anderson has stressed that Javanese conceive of power as homogeneous.<sup>25</sup> That is true, and it explains why Javanese can treat a leader's control over people, spirits, and the world as somehow all of a piece. Nevertheless, it is also true that individuals' capacity to channel and manipulate power can differ in significant ways, and those differences make it possible to counter the concentration of authority in one person. In contrast to the inclination to make a variety of demands upon a headman, efforts to domesticate his authority fit a tendency to distribute kinds of authority among several different persons. So, for example, a man enters into agreements to provide labor to several different landholders (who in turn employ a series of different laborers); he seeks guidance on ritual procedures from one authority but finds a teacher of mystical wisdom in someone else; and he may go to yet others for cure from sickness, advice about dreams, or any other mystical need. Loyalty certainly develops in these ties. Still, there seems a pervasive impulse to limit the nature and intensity of any single bond. By recognizing authority in a variety of distinct figures, people limit the degree of authority they acknowledge in--and the degree of dependency they feel upon--any one of them. If one must respect an official for the political clout he wields, one can nevertheless deny him the respect granted a curer, who in turn can lay no claim to the particular prestige of the religious official, or the puppeteer, or the aristocrat.

This dispersion of authority among several figures fits the Javanese concern, really just an aspect of their understanding of idealized power, to maintain what could be termed their personal sovereignty. This is a concern to demonstrate and assure one's own status by remaining impervious to external influence of any sort, including political influence. The higher a person's status, the more carefully he tries--and the more frequently he manages--to avoid others' control. The poor and low status are much less capable of resisting influence and constraints. But people of all estates, while they may attempt to tap others' power, try to do so without incurring obligations to the sources of that power, because to be subject to obligations suggests that one's own status is insufficient to resist them.

This effort to draw upon any concentration of power while avoiding dependency upon it links events in villages to those at a higher level of magnitude. Tambiah and Anderson both point out how difficult it was to maintain control over people at the periphery of a Southeast Asian polity, far from the control of the powerful center. People were often ready to switch allegiances from one princely figure to another. A local leader might try to establish himself as a new center, for example, and with the multiplication of centers came the possibility of playing one off against the other.<sup>26</sup> Even though the concept of the exemplary center implied voluntary submission to a ruler at the level of the state, it nevertheless militated against submission to anyone nearby, since that would necessarily compromise one's own authority. In Java, this

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25. Anderson, "Idea of Power," p. 7.

26. Tambiah, *World Conqueror and World Renouncer*, pp. 121-23; Anderson, "Idea of Power," p. 34.

repeats a general pattern by which a person takes advantage of any dispersion of authority in order to protect his own. One way to assure such dispersion was, and remains, not only to switch allegiances, but also to look to different figures for different manifestations or applications of power. Even though power is believed to be unitary in nature, nonetheless its different communicants are thought able to wield it effectively to diverse ends. This means that one can recognize different centers of power simultaneously. To do so necessarily undermines the potency of any one center, and so undercuts the doctrine of the exemplary center--thereby opening on to the conflicting claims and allegiances with which Southeast Asian communities are filled.

### *Conclusions*

Javanese villagers exhibit a consistent ambivalence toward power. Their criteria for judging a headman's performance reflect simultaneous desires to benefit materially and mystically by his power and to defend themselves from it. I do not mean to say by this that the Javanese idea of power is a deliberately falsified construct, cleverly designed to box a headman in. On the contrary, Javanese deeply wish to find in a headman, as in many other figures, a person they believe truly powerful, one who can indeed provide them with the sense of well-being such power assures. The very lack of strong formal organization in Javanese society heightens the need to find in a superior a guarantor of stable, protective, and dependable order. Yet it is true that, on the ground, the implicit theory of power as an attractive and compelling, rather than coercive, force, undergoes some modification. In particular, the idealization takes on a defensive coloring, becoming as much a sanction against some actions as a support for others. Such shifts in emphasis are the fate of any ideology when it appears not as an ideal formulation but as an assumption acted upon in the world. And the idealization and particular context are mediated variously. The headmen of Karanganom, Pasahan, and Kenthungan demonstrate a range of possibilities within which a village headman in Java today is likely to act. But all three men were judged with reference to certain conceptions of how authority should be exercised, conceptions that are just as much at issue in villages as they are at higher levels in the political hierarchy.

It may be asked, however, what difference it all makes, whether ideas about how a headman should fulfill his role really affect what happens in a Javanese village. The question assumes that there is a distribution of political might--what we would call power, conceived of as a coercive capacity--that stands apart from any Javanese ideas about ideal behavior and definitions of power, and that overpowers them. I would neither accept a radical dichotomy between reality and consciousness, as that position might imply, nor deny the possibility that power is susceptible of diverse ramifications in a Javanese village. The degree to which a lurah can assume, or at least project, the right to exercise violence has varied historically, even in the past twenty years. As I have mentioned, the aftermath of the 1960s made such threats very real. Since then, however, they have diminished. When Pak Lurah Karanganom, still a candidate, campaigned for office in the company--if reports are true--of a soldier carrying a gun, he was exploiting his family's connections in order to make diffuse but real physical threats. Nevertheless, his control over villagers was not absolute, because it was not backed up with any efficient or reliable force. The incident involving the father of Yu Palmin's daughter made that fact quite clear. Villagers know that, if they ever need any sort of

document from the village office, they had better be in the good graces of the officials who issue such papers. In the case of Karanganom, people intending any large-scale building project knew that permits would be obtained more easily if Pak Lurah was the contractor. But few people had the means to do any large-scale construction: in this case, it was the wealthy, not the poor, who were particularly affected by the lurah's control. That control varied not only situationally, but also spatially. When Pak Lurah Karanganom convinced villagers in the hamlet in which his house and the village office were located to build decorative walls around their yards, but merely expressed the hope that villagers in other hamlets would follow suit, he in effect admitted that his authority was greater where he was most visible, at the center, and less impressive in other areas under his jurisdiction. The degree of control a lurah exercises by military, economic, or bureaucratic means, in sum, varies according to the current political context, and the particular needs and vulnerabilities of the people with whom he is dealing. At the same time, the respect he garners affects the degree to which his aims are seconded, his wishes heeded, and his counsel sought. The respect he wins depends not just on military, economic, and bureaucratic might, but, just as importantly, on how well he fulfills the idealized image of the spiritually powerful, generous, and benevolent leader.

When power is not exercised absolutely, and it very rarely is, then some degree of negotiation is possible. Such negotiations are never clear-cut, and their outcome is never foregone. As soon as they arise, however, certain assumptions about the rules of the game enter into play. I have tried to show that understandings of centers and of power as idealized, tapped, and/or controlled, inform the negotiations that take place between Javanese villagers and their headmen, even if at times the play upon ambiguities in those conceptions undermines the doctrine of the exemplary center in fundamental ways.